

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022*

**Remarks at a Reception for Democratic Gubernatorial Candidate Charles J. Crist, Jr., in Golden Beach, Florida**

*November 1, 2022*

Congressman, thank you for showing me that picture. We go back a long way. We go back a long way.

Look, folks, this, to me, is one of the most important races in the country. I called Charlie a while ago and told him anything I can do to help, I'd be happy to attempt to do that.

There's a lot on the ballot. When I announced for President, I said I was running for three—I didn't plan on running again for the United States Presidency and/or for any office. I had just lost my son Beau to glioblastoma after being around for—those burn pits in Iraq for a year. And I was—I was "Professor Biden" at the University of Pennsylvania—a full professor. And I—it was going fine.

But when the folks who are of the ilk that the guy Charlie is running against began to rear their heads en masse, I changed my mind.

You know, remember what happened down in Virginia, when those folks came out of the fields, carrying torches—and carrying not only torches, but also swastikas? Not a joke. I mean, it's hard to remember and believe it—as well as making sure that they had White supremacists with them.

And seeing the same anti-Semitic chanting, the same antisemitic bile that was chanted in Germany in the thirties. And my predecessor was asked, "What do you think?" And he said, "There are very good people on both sides." And the Republican Party basically remained silent.

This is not your father's Republican Party. This is a different group of people. I served in the Senate and as the Vice President a long time, and I've had a lot of—I've been known to be able to get a lot done because I've been able to convince people to work out compromises.

I've had six United States Senators, Charlie, who are sitting there now, come to me. And I swore I would not—one—four of them came individually, and two came together. And I promised I would never reveal their names, and I won't. But they told me they agreed with me, but they just couldn't vote with me because they'd lose their seat. They'd be primaried. They'd be gone. Not very courageous, but very telling.

And when I say this is not your father's Republican Party, I mean it. These guys aren't the same. I served with a lot of very conservative people. And yet we got along. We argued like hell on the floor of the Senate, and then we'd go down and have lunch together in the Senate dining room. We didn't agree, but we didn't malign one another.

And folks, you know, I said I was running for three reasons. And this all fits with Charlie, in my view. The first reason I was running was to restore some decency, a sense of honor. To be—to restore—and I use the phrase the "soul of America." And I meant it. I wasn't joking. Restore the soul of America—who we are as a people, what we stand for.

The second reason I said I was running was to, in fact, deal with making sure that we were able to generate and get things done together to be more bipartisan, to bring things together.

And the third reason I ran, I said, was to—to unite the country—unite the parties, unite the country.

And then, you know, along came Trump again. I hadn't planned on running. But when he ran, I decided I had to run.

And I tell you this because I have a number of beautiful grandchildren. They're smart kids, and they're the loves of my life and the life of my love. And every single day, I talk to all six of them, either jointly on a cell call or I e-mail them.

The point is this—that they asked for a—we have a tradition in our family—and I think Debbie is the only one who knows about it—which is that any child can ask for a family meeting. Not a joke. Not a joke. It's seldom done. But when done, it has to be respected.

And I got a phone call from my eldest, who now is a lawyer with one of those 6,000-person law firms. [*Laughter*] And she was then a freshman at—no, a sophomore at Columbia Law—a second-year at Columbia Law School. And her sister was a senior at Penn. Another sister a freshman at Penn. And then my deceased son's children were in grade school—not grade school, in high school. And the youngest one was 14 years old.

And so they came over. They called and said they wanted to have a family meeting on Sunday. And this was a—this was a Friday, and I was in Washington. So I said I'd come home. And we sat down—and this is the God's truth. And we sat down, and they said—they started off and said, "Pop, you've got to run." They call me "Pop." They said, "You've got to run."

And they each gave me the reasons why I should run, including: "You know that's what Beau would want you to do, Pop. You know he'd want you to run." "Daddy wants you to run." Et cetera. And then my little one, the youngest one, who's now a—going to—going into his senior in high school, took out his cell phone. They said, "We know"—the reason I was reluctant to run: I knew how ugly it was going to be. Because these guys are ugly. And he took out his cell phone. My wife doesn't like me telling this story because she thinks it may bring on some negative things toward my grandson.

But he took out his cell phone, and he showed me a picture of me walking out of the Cathedral of St. Anthony's with my hand on the hand-draped [*flag-draped*]\* casket of my son, who won the Bronze Star and the Conspicuous Service Medal, and was a major in the United States Army and the attorney general of Delaware.

And I had my hand on him, my little guy, who was then—I guess he was 13—12, 13 years old. And I had my hand under his chin, because I used to hold my son that way. My—and we're walking out with the flag-draped coffin. There's a picture. And the title underneath it said, "Biden molests another child."

And so that's when I decided to run—when they asked me to do it, knowing what they—because their whole lives—entire lives I've either been a Senator, a Vice President, or now a President. So they knew what was coming; it wasn't going to be a shock to them.

The point I'm making in telling you this is, Charlie is running against Donald Trump incarnate. This guy is not—he fits—he doesn't fit any of the categories I've talked about. The way he deals, the way he denies, the way he—you know, they talk about Charlie, they talk about—you know, I always say, "Democracy is on the ballot." I literally mean it. Not hyperbole.

It's really on the ballot. How can you say you are not supporting autocracy and your—[*inaudible*]*—*democracy when you call the people who storm the Capitol and kill—end up two cops dying, so many people hurt by the thousands—broke down the doors of the House and the Senate—how can you say, when you refer to them as "patriots," that you are a democrat with a small "d"?

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\* White House correction.

How can you say that? How can you say that you in fact care about democracy when you deny the existence of a win? The only way you could win is either you win or the other guy cheated. This has not happened since the Civil War. It sounds like hyperbole, but it hadn't happened since then, as bad as it is now.

And look what happened—I've been talking to Nancy Pelosi. Look what happened. And look at the response—the so-called response from Republicans, making jokes about it and/or saying, "Well, you know, it's not because of what's being said and not said."

The reason why people are doing what they're doing—there's a lot of unstable people in a population as large as ours. When they hear every single day these outrageous lies—these outrageous lies across the board about everything; when they look at the internet and see what's being said, stated and talk about, you know, where we keep children in basements to molest them and all these kinds of things—look what's happened. And think however this guy is demonizing LGBTQ [LGBTQ]\* population. Think how his opponent is demonizing anyone who disagrees with him.

And so you wonder why—how this guy came breaking into Paul—and Paul is a friend, as—as is Nancy. I've known them for years and years.

How can you—how can you be surprised? The guy purchases a hammer to kneecap the number three in line to be President of the United States of America—number two in line, I should say, to be the United—President of the United States of America.

And nobody on that party condemns it for exactly what it is. Says it's not because when I made a comment about this is to be expected when you have leaders of the other party condoning the kind of conduct that is—that I've just discussed and others.

Well, there's one overwhelming reason why I'm for Charlie—I'm not joking about this: because he has an enormous integrity. Enormous integrity.

Well, Charlie and I, in a strange way, may have been raised by the same dad. My dad used to say, "Everyone—everyone, everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity." And, Charlie, you do that. Everybody. It's what really matters. Character is on the ballot this time. It really is. Along with democracy.

Secondly, you women in the audience—your basic fundamental personal rights are on the line. I never thought that I would see the day when, after almost 50 years, the Supreme Court ruled that *Roe v. Wade* was not—was unconstitutional, that there was no right of privacy in the Constitution.

We've got a great lawyer behind me here as our host. But one of the things that I remember why there—they didn't have the Bill of Rights initially. The reason why Madison didn't want the Bill of Rights is he was worried some would be left out. And if it was left out, it would mean the right didn't exist.

And when I debated Bork, as some of you may remember, 100 years ago, I said—[laughter]—I said, "The difference between you and I, let me be clear, is I believe I have all the rights I possess merely because I'm a child of God, not because the Constitution gave them to me, because I have them." What the Constitution did, the Constitution guaranteed those rights. It guaranteed those rights.

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\* White House correction.

And there's a thing called the Ninth Amendment. And the Ninth Amendment was all about saying basically anything that is not mentioned as existing is retained by the people—not by the Government, retained by the people.

And you saw what Clarence Thomas said. He said—he talked about the fact that not only did he think this right should be taken away—the right to choose—but the right to marry is implicated, the right to use contraception. The famous case—you know? Anyway.

The point is, these guys are extreme in the extreme. And you know, as a lawyer, what I'm talking about. I mean extreme in the extreme. And so much more is at stake.

I showed up at the first G-7 meeting, which is the largest democratic economies in the world, in February after I got elected. And I sat down—I was sitting—there were just seven of us. I sat down between Macron and Boris. [Laughter] And I said—I looked at him and I said—all kidding aside, I looked and I said, "America is back." And they looked at me and said, "For how long?"

And then, I think it was Macron who said to me—although it could've been Scholz said to me: "Imagine what you'd think, Mr. President, if tomorrow—you went to bed tonight, and tomorrow you woke up and found out that the same group of people—the same number of people crashed the British Parliament, broke down the doors of the Parliament and the House, and contested an election. What would you think about Great Britain?"

The rest of the world is looking at us, Charlie. They're looking at us.

Let me say something outrageous. If I have any genuine expertise, it's in foreign policy. I've done it my whole life from the time I was a kid. And the rest of the world is wondering who in the hell we are, what's going on. "For how long, Joe? For how long?"

Well, what happens is, if we don't move on, deal with the State and local officials—you know, there are 350 deniers, Charlie. Three hundred and fifty people on the ballot—on the Republican ballot, from everything from statehouse races to the secretary of state, to Governors, to Senators, et cetera. Three hundred and fifty. Why do we become?

And look at the—look at the extended extremism. You have women—I'm remembering that—I think she was that—was it a 10-year-old girl who was raped? It turns out it was incest, I think. Pregnant. And she was denied the opportunity in her State to have a lifesaving procedure for her.

And so it's really important for a State the size of Florida and the consequence of Florida—it gets on the right side of history again. Because I tell you what, "with the grace of God and the good will of the neighbors, and the creek not rising," as my grandpop would say, we're going to win two more seats in the Senate.

We are—you saw what a guy—he used to be a friend; I don't know what happened to him—Lindsey Graham. Lindsey Graham. He was—John McCain and I were buddies. Close friends. John asked me on his deathbed to do his eulogy, which I did. And John and I would argue like hell with one another, and then embrace.

But here's what happened. Something happened to Lindsey. I don't know what it is, but Lindsey is now talking about the need to elect more Republican Senators so they can pass a law codifying *Dobbs*. Because that's how that's going to work—what the States do—codifying *Dobbs* so it becomes the law of the land so no State, no matter what happened—because if the Congress passes it and the President signs it, it's the law of the land.

*Roe vs. Wade* didn't satisfy everyone. I'm a practicing Catholic. I've supported *Roe vs. Wade*. And the reason I support *Roe vs. Wade* is the most rational basis upon which confessional faiths

can agree: No one knows precisely when does human life begin. *[Inaudible]*—broke into the three trimesters. It made sense. It made sense on who has what authority under what circumstances.

And yet you have now these candidates out there talking about they—"Well, you know, the decision should be made between a woman, her doctor, and a local elected official." *[Laughter]* As you stated—right, Charlie?—not—that's not hyperbole.

And so, look, folks, there's a lot at stake, a whole lot at stake. And we need someone with Charlie's integrity and intelligence. We really, really do. And it matters. It matters for a State like Florida. You're powerful State. You're one of the biggest States and growing States in America. It matters. It matters.

And I can go into a whole lot of other things. I can tell I'm keeping you too long already. *[Laughter]* If my wife were here—if my wife were here, she'd say, "Joey, hush up." *[Laughter]* Well, what a—I just want to say three other things. And I'll be quick; I won't go into detail on them. But if you want to talk to me after, I can stay around a little bit, and I could go into more detail.

Number one, everything we've passed this Governor has overwhelmingly benefited from. I just came up with billions of dollars for these storms that occurred in Florida.

*Audience member.* Thank you, President.

*The President.* Well—well, no, no, no—and by the way, he opposed the legislation that provided \$369 billion dollars for the environment. He opposed it. But guess what? He's up there with me, man. *[Laughter]* He is going to make sure it's "What we're doing this, and I'm doing"—and by the way, the Recovery *[Rescue]*\* Act we passed—the reason why you have cops, firefighters, and teachers in the classroom is because of the Federal Government. *[Inaudible]*—no, I mean it, seriously.

Because he didn't have the money. The resources weren't coming in. So that's why we did it.

They talk about how, in the infrastructure law—look at all—we're going to spend billions of dollars—tens of billions of dollars here in Florida, preparing everything from bridges, which you need badly; to highways; to airports; to across the board. To make sure that you have clean drinking water, get rid of all those lead pipes you still have around here. And he's going to take credit for it all, but he strongly opposes it. He strongly opposed it.

There such a thing in sort of truth—*[inaudible]*—here. You know?

The other point I want to make is: During all this talk about Republicans talking about how we Democrats, led by Biden, have—are big spenders and they're—guess what? We reduced the Federal budget *[deficit]* by one trillion, four hundred billion dollars this year. The largest amount in the history of America. We cut the Federal deficit in half in one year. Last year, we reduced the deficit by \$350 billion.

What did they do? What do they want the money for? They want the money to keep the Trump tax cut going and extend it, because it only goes to—and, by the way, a lot of you qualify for it, but you're not saying—*[laughter]*—no, it's a good thing. That's not—look, I think there's capitalism I support as long as there's competition. Capitalism without competition is despotism.

But my point is, I'm not a—I come from a corporate State of the world. We've got more corporations in the State of Delaware than every other State in America combined. No, I'm—not

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\* White House correction.

a joke. Combined. And I was elected seven times as Senator in that State. So I'm not antibusiness, but I think everybody has a fair share.

You know, what they most want to cut? I was able to raise the corporate tax to a minimum of 15—15 percent because there were five—there were four—five Fortune 500 companies who made \$40 billion in 2020 and paid zero in income taxes. Zero.

Now, God forbid, they have to pay 15 percent. That's less than the people who are helping put this party on tonight. That's less than a schoolteacher pays. That's less than a firefighter pays. That's less than a cop pays.

And guess what? All that money—we provided billions of dollars—tens of billions of dollars for law enforcement. They didn't spend it. I—anyway. *[Laughter]*

Look, one of the things that was going to happen here is—and it's going to really matter to Florida—and that is the environmental things that—a lovely lady asked me about making sure that we deal with utilities. Well, guess what? Twenty-one utility companies came to me and said if in fact I was able to pass what I passed, the utility bills would go down, not up.

But here's the deal: We're now in a situation where the utility companies, we're—I am not allowing for drilling off the certain parts of the shores and oceans and—but—*[applause]*—that they still have enormous opportunities to drill. Enormous opportunities on private lands as well as public lands—enormous. And they're not doing it. You see the profit they make?

The eight largest oil companies, they made, the last two quarters, \$100 billion in profit while the American public is sucking wind.

So, my point is, you don't have to be—I mean, I'm looking for centrist Democrats. I'm looking for people I can work with. I'm looking for people who understand complex issues. I'm looking for people who can speak directly to other people.

And it matters who the Governors are, because you're going to determine what votes get counted, who counts those votes and makes sure that they're legit.

And, Charlie, I've got 6,000 more things to say about you, but I'm not going to do it. I'll refrain from doing it. And—except to say, Charlie and I have one other thing in common: We both—I married up, and he's about to marry up. *[Laughter]*

Thank you all. Thank you, Charlie. *[Inaudible]*—a lot is on the ballot This is a genuine inflection point in American history. How we decide the next 4 years is going to determine what this country looks like 40 years from now. Not a joke.

God bless you all, and may God protect our troops.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:47 p.m. at the residence of Scott P. and Annie Schlesinger. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Ronald D. DeSantis of Florida; former President Donald J. Trump; Rep. Deborah Wasserman Schultz; Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi and her husband Paul; David DePape, the alleged assailant in the attack on Mr. Pelosi in their San Francisco, CA, residence on October 28; Supreme Court Associate Justice Clarence Thomas; President Emmanuel Macron of France; former Prime Minister Boris Johnson of the United Kingdom; Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany; and Sen. Lindsey O. Graham. He also referred to his grandchildren Naomi, Finnegan, Roberta "Maisy", Natalie, and R. Hunter Biden.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Florida Democratic gubernatorial candidate Charles J. Crist, Jr., reception in Golden Beach, FL.

*Locations:* Golden Beach, FL.

*Names:* Biden, Finnegan J.; Biden, Jill T.; Biden, Naomi K.; Biden, Natalie P.; Biden, R. Hunter, II; Biden, Roberta M. "Maisy"; Crist, Charles J., Jr.; DePape, David; DeSantis, Ronald D.; Graham, Lindsey O.; Johnson, Boris ; Macron, Emmanuel; Pelosi, Nancy; Pelosi, Paul F., Sr.; Schlesinger, Scott P.; Scholz, Olaf; Thomas, Clarence; Trump, Donald J.; Wasserman Schultz, Deborah.

*Subjects:* Armed Forces, U.S : Servicemembers :: Environmental exposures in war zones; Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; California : Attack on Paul F. Pelosi, Sr., husband of Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi in their San Francisco residence; Civil rights : Minorities :: Anti-Semitism; Civil rights : Same-sex marriage; Civil rights : Women's rights and gender equality; Commerce, international : Group of Seven (G-7) nations; Congress : Bipartisanship; Congress : House of Representatives :: Speaker; District of Columbia : 2021 civil unrest and violence at U.S. Capitol; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Elections : 2022 congressional elections; Energy : Domestic production, promotion efforts; Energy : Oil and gas industry :: Federal regulations and oversight; Environment : Lead service lines, replacement efforts; Florida : 2022 gubernatorial election; Florida : Governor; Florida : Hurricane Ian, damage and recovery efforts; Florida : President's visits; France : President; Germany : Chancellor; Health and medical care : Abortion; Health and medical care : Contraception and family planning; Infrastructure, national improvement efforts; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: Associate Justice; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: U.S. Supreme Court opinion overturning 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade; Law enforcement and crime : State and community law enforcement agencies, Federal support; Taxation : Corporate tax rates; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; United Kingdom : Prime Minister; Virginia : 2017 civil unrest and violence in Charlottesville.

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